

Trip report of a family wildlife watching holiday to South Africa

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Or

“How a family holiday turned into an ultimate mammal watching tour”



Introduction

In september 2004 my wife, a botanist, and I, a birder, went on our first long holiday together outside Europe. The destination was South Africa. There we discovered that we are both mammalwatchers. We loved South Africa so much that we went again in April 2005. After that we went on mammalwatching holidays to the United States, Kenya, Australia and India. For those trips I used the extremely useful information from the brilliant website www.mammalwatching.com.

On that website I discovered fantastic locations in South Africa that we hadn't visited yet and we decided that one day we should go back to this great country.

Then the kids were born and for many years we stayed in our own country on holidays and didn't do much mammalwatching. Our sons are now 11 and 14 and last year we had a great holiday in Costa Rica with some nice mammals. Shortly after that it was decided that this year we would go to South Africa and do the itinerary I had been working on for all these years.

As a result this was something in between a family holiday and a "hardcore" mammalwatching holiday. We did only a few early morning game drives (none in Kruger) so our youngest would get his sleep. We did 10 night drives and many of the mammal species we saw were seen during those night drives. Oh, we also added some South African culture to our programme: we went to the rugby match of the Cape Town Stormers against the All Blacks (New Zealand) in Cape Town which combined really well with seeing Heavyside's Dolphins from our apartment 😊.

My mission: a family holiday can be combined with mammalwatching

This holiday was also the (second) start (after Costa Rica) of my mission to prove that a family holiday can be combined with wildlifewatching in general and mammalwatching in particular without your kids having a trauma for the rest of their lives. To be honest I think we are way past this point as both my kids have now been on a youth camp catching mice (as part of a monitoring project) and they are both eager to go on a mammalwatching holiday again (although the oldest one is also turning into an avid birder).

The mammalwatching (and birdwatching)

In 3,5 weeks we saw an incredible number of 82 different mammal species. One is feral (Grey Squirrel) and some antelopes are (re)introduced, but still an enormous amount. Especially when you consider that there are only three bat-species on the list. In Costa Rica we had a list of 22 different mammal species including 9 bat-species.

We also saw some very rare (behaviour of) mammals like Brown Hyena, Striped Polecat, Aardvark, Honey Badger, two species of Otter, a pack of hunting wild dogs and 6 lions eating a Zebra. Also almost all species were seen (and photographed and filmed) really well.

This shows that even on (kind of) a family holiday you can see many mammal species in South Africa. Although the holiday was sometimes very similar to a "hardcore" mammalwatching holiday. At one point my youngest son said he was in an infinite timeloop of wildlifewatching. And the most frightening moment was when my oldest son said he was releasing his inner Jon Hall.....

We saw most of our target species. We only dipped on Cheetah (in Kruger National Park), Greater Galago and Caracal.

We also like watching birds (especially my oldest son and me). We are not really into the little brown jobbies, but there were plenty of birds in South Africa that we loved, like Bustards, Hornbills, Secretary Bird, Vultures, Eagles, Penguin and of course the Lilac-breasted Roller. The Southern Ground Hornbill was the only bird we would have loved to see, but dipped.

Safety

We never felt unsafe. I think it helped that we mostly stayed in National Parks. In Cape Town and Hermanus we were very careful after dark, but felt safe there as well. It also helps if you have everything organised and plan enough driving time to arrive everywhere before dark. Due to a rescheduling of our flight home, we had a whole (bonus) day in Johannesburg. We hired a (bird) guide to take us around that day and I think that was a very sensible thing to do.

To be honest, the scariest moments were when there was a huge bull Elephant on the road in the Kruger that was being harassed by an idiot in a car that kept coming closer to him (and we were on the other side and had little room to back up) and when I happily walked past a huge Puff Adder that was sunning next to the walking path and that I somehow didn't see because I was looking for birds.....

The Plan: three holidays in one holiday

Our plan was to visit three very different areas in South Africa:

- A. Kruger National Park and surroundings
- B. The Cape (Cape Town, West Coast National Park and Hermanus)
- C. The Karoo (Karoo National Park, New Holme Nature Lode and Marrick Safari)

These three areas are all beautiful in their own way and have their own mammal and bird species. Visiting these three areas made it possible to see so many very different species of mammals (and birds) in one holiday. It felt very special to see Leopards and Rhino's in the same holiday as Whales and Penguins.

July and August are also really good months to visit these three areas. In Kruger it was very dry and (relatively) cold and mammals were easily seen due to the low vegetation and mammals gathering near water. In the Cape it was early spring and we saw whales at Hermanus, courtship of birds and the beautiful wild flowers of Postberg Reserve (West Coast National park).

We had two domestic flights with Airlink, one from Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport to Cape Town and one from Kimberley to Johannesburg. Both were excellent and also not expensive. We also liked leaving our rental cars at and flying from these small airports. Especially the flight from Kruger to Cape Town (2,5 hours) helped to combine these three areas in one holiday.

Practicalities

We hired cars through Sunny Cars (which include all insurances) and got our cars from Tempest, a local rental company. It all worked smoothly and the cars were fine. We had a SUV both times and that was really handy. In the Karoo a SUV is even (much) more necessary than in Kruger National Park and to be honest, we would have preferred a bigger SUV there.

All accommodation in the National Parks was booked through the SAN Parks website.

Communication with SAN Parks also worked really well. We bought a Wildcard which was financially sensible, but also saved us some administrative fuss. We ended up using it at Kruger, West Coast, Karoo and Mokala National Park and even at the Penguin colony at Stoney Point. In Hermanus and Cape Town we booked accommodation through AirBnb which is very convenient for these locations.

Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort and the airport hotel in Johannesburg were booked through booking.com and Millstream Farm was booked through their own website.

We mainly used our credit cards to pay. Many National Parks are now changing into cashless. The roads were mainly rather good. We only had a detour in the Karoo which was terrible and made our travel day from New Holme Nature Lodge to Marrick Safari into a rather long travelling day.

I had bought a DV2 Thermal Camera before this holiday and was curious what the benefits would be. In night drives in Kruger National Park I only used it to identify a mammal if we had

seen eyeshine far away. In my opinion the guides at Kruger drive to fast at night drives for me to be able to use the thermal camera very well. At other night drives (Karoo National Park, New Holme Guest Lodge and Marrick Safari) it worked better, but there the guides nearly always saw the animal before I did and it was always a tough decision to either look at it with my binoculars or the thermal camera to identify it. The thermal camera worked really well when we were exploring on our own (on foot). The highlight was an extremely cute sleeping Grey Climbing Mouse that I found in Satara Rest Camp after our night drive.

Itinerary:

Tuesday 28th of July: Flight to Johannesburg

Wednesday 29th of July: Early arrival in Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International Airport. Car pick up (Tempest, organised through Sunny Cars). Travel to Dullstroom with a lunch stop at ALZU Petropoort next to the N4.

Overnight at Millstream Farm close to Dullstroom (www.millstreamfarm.co.za).

Thursday 30th of July: Drive from Dullstroom to Orpen Gate (Kruger National Park) and through to Satara Rest Camp. Night drive.

Friday 31st of July: Exploring Kruger from Satara Rest Camp. Night drive.

Saturday 1st of August: Drive from Satara Rest Camp to Orpen Gate and through to Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort.

Sunday 2nd of August: Hiking at Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort.

Monday 3rd of August: Drive from Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort to Phabeni Gate (Kruger National Park) via Lake Panic Bird Hide and skirting Skukuza to Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp. Night drive.

Tuesday 4th of August: Drive from Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp to Lower Sabie Rest Camp. Night drive.

Wednesday 5th of August: Exploring Kruger National Park from Lower Sabie Rest Camp.

Thursday 6th of August: Drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp via Crocodile Bridge Gate to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport. Airlink direct flight to Cape Town international airport. Pick up at airport with www.backpackerbus.co.za to Mouille Point.

Friday 7th of August: Cape Town including watching a rugby match of the Cape Town Stormers against the All Blacks (New Zealand) at DHL Stadium.

Saturday 8th of August: Cape Town including a visit to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

Sunday 9th of August: Car pick up (Tempest organised through Sunny Cars) and drive to West Coast National Park. Accommodation: Jo-Anne's Beach Cottage B in the national park.

Monday 10th of August: Exploring the Postberg Reserve and the rest of West Coast National Park.

Thursday 11th of August: Drive from West Coast National Park via Stoney Point Penguin Colony (Betty's Bay) to Hermanus. Accommodation: apartment at the Windsor Hotel (through AirBnb).

Wednesday 12th of August: Two of us went shark cage diving in Gansbaai.

Thursday 13th of August: Walking the cliff path in Hermanus and a hike at the Fernkloof Nature Reserve.

Friday 14th of August: (Long) drive from Hermanus to Karoo National Park Rest Camp. Night drive.

Saturday 15th of August: Exploring Karoo National Park. Night drive.

Sunday 16th of August: Drive from Karoo National Park to New Holme Nature Lodge (KhoiSan). Night drive.

Monday 17th of August: New Holme Nature Lodge: morning Meerkat Tour, some searching for succulents and a night drive.

Tuesday 18th of August: Morning birdwatching drive. Then drive from New Holme Nature Lodge to Marrick Safari (near Kimberley). Night drive.

Wednesday 19th of August: Marrick safari: bird hide, (long) Sengi tour and night drive.

Thursday 20th of August: From Marrick safari to Mokala National Park. Drive from Lilydale rest camp to Stofdam bird hide and back. Then to Kimberley airport and AirLink flight to Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International Airport. Airport shuttle to Southern Sun Hotel at O.R. Tambo International Airport.

Friday 21st of August: Day of birdwatching with Niall Perrins of Bustard Birding at Marievale Bird Sanctuary and Rietvlei Nature Reserve. Accommodation: Southern Sun Hotel at O.R. Tambo International Airport.

Saturday 22nd of August: Flight from Johannesburg.

Places visited

Millstream Farm, Dullstroom: a good place for Otters

We wanted a short drive on the first day and decided to stay at Dullstroom. On the internet I saw stories that both Cape Clawless Otters and Spotted-necked Otter are common and commonly seen at Millstream Farm. This is a fly-fishing resort where they have a lot of trout and this has attracted the otters. They have decided to embrace the otters and not try to chase them away. We were there one afternoon and one morning and saw the Otters in the afternoon in and around the reedbeds of Lake Millstream (the side where the jetty and the cottages are). At first we saw several Cape Clawless Otters that were a bit shy. We waited for them to appear again and were very surprised when two Spotted-necked Otters (first one and then the other) came to investigate us! In the morning we didn't see them and from what we heard the late afternoon is best to see them. All in all this seems like a very good place to see both Otter species. It is located conveniently between Johannesburg and Kruger National Park and there is also good birding and some mammalwatching (Oribi) in the vicinity of Dullstroom.

Millstream Farm is a very scenic place to stay with nice accommodation. We saw a Mountain Reedbuck grazing late afternoon around our cottage and there are plenty of (introduced) Zebra,

Springbok and Blesbok. Note that you can only rent a cottage for a minimum of two nights. We wanted an early check in and paid for two nights while we stayed only one night.

Kruger National Park

We only spent 5 nights in the Kruger National Park. In my opinion Satara Rest Camp and Lower Sabie Rest Camp are the camps with the most wildlife around them. We booked in October 2025 and at that time it was already impossible to book the accommodation we wanted to in these rest camps on the days we preferred. As a result we split our visit to Kruger in two and spent some time in between in Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort. This worked very well as it gave my youngest son some time to relax.

Originally our third rest camp was Letaba (for bushbaby's, rodents and bats) but as a result of the floods of January 2026 Letaba was not up and running yet. There was not much choice left, but we were able to spend the remaining night at Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp. This is a great camp and in my opinion much nicer than Satara but the surroundings have less wildlife than Satara. Lower Sabie is also a fantastic camp where you can see Fruit Bats at the reception and Hippopotamus, Elephants and Buffalo while having lunch.

We saw most of our mammals in the last 2 hours before we had to be back in camp so it is very important to sleep in a camp that is located in good wildlife watching territory and Satara and Lower Sabie seem to be the best. To be honest the area around Crocodile Bridge Rest Camp was also good and this might also be a good place to stay.

In total we saw 6 Leopards, 11 Lions (three times), 6 White Rhino's, Wild Dogs (three times near Satara including a pack of 12 that started hunting), 2 Honey Badgers, Buffalo and plenty of Elephants. Also we saw 4 Kori Bustards (near Crocodile Bridge), 4 lappet-faced Vultures (near Lower Sabie), 6 Saddle-billed Storks (near Berg-en-Dal and Lower Sabie) and a Martial Eagle (near Crocodile Bridge).

We dipped on Cheetah. I think we were a bit unlucky with Cheetah as they were seen daily near Satara, Lower Sabie and Crocodile Bridge when we were there.

The night drives in Kruger are a bit hit and miss although my kids liked that they could spotlight themselves.

The two night drives at Satara gave us (only) two Large Spotted Genets, one lion, many Spotted Hyenas, a Verreaux's Eagle Owl, a White-faced Owl and a Marsh Owl.

The nightdrive at Berg-en-Dal was in a much smaller group and vehicle and we saw a Serval and Civet (both bad views), fighting Elephants and two Flap-necked Chameleons (both spotted by my oldest son who saw a "weird leaf"). I understand that White-tailed Mongoose is frequently seen here.

The nightdrive at Lower Sabie was very successful. We saw a Civet (very well), 6 Lions eating a Zebra, at least three Lesser Bushbabies (but far away), a Large Spotted Genet, two Porcupines, a Leopard, two Barn Owls and two Flap-necked Chameleon (spotted by my youngest son who now knew what to look for).

Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort

This is a nice resort in an even (much) better natural area. It's located perfectly to visit all the sights of Blyde River Canyon and you can do some beautiful hikes from the resort, also as a day visitor.

It's also an excellent place to watch mammals. At the Upper Viewpoint there are both Yellow-spotted Hyrax and Rock Hyrax. They are not abundant so it could take some time or a few visits to see the Yellow-spotted Hyrax as they are a bit shy and the Upper Viewpoint can be quite busy. We also saw a group of Dwarf Mongoose here and Klipspringer was seen (daytime and nighttime)

from to the road close to the Upper Viewpoint. Chacma Baboon and Vervet Monkey are also common and you have to be careful that they don't raid your house or car.

I read in other trip reports that Bushbabies were easily seen at night here. We spent quite some time walking around at night (with the thermal camera and the flashlight) and didn't see any Bushbabies here. Maybe it was too cold. We did see a Jameson's Red Rock Rabbit on both nights at the (managers) gardens next to the road close to the Upper Viewpoint. My impression is that they go there each night for the nice green grass and are easy to see here.

On the birdside we saw a fantastic group of Trumpeter Hornbills in a flowering tree next to the entrance road, discovered by my oldest son and wife when they went to the Lodge's shop to buy some lunch.

Cape Town

If you choose to visit Cape Town, it is worth considering to stay at Mouille Point. Heavyside's Dolphin are often seen there and it was great to see them from our balcony.

West Coast National Park

This is a beautiful park and when we visited the Postberg Reserve within the park, the flowers were impressive! The flowers were rather early this year so we were lucky to see them in bloom halfway August. Note that they only open when it is not clouded and warm enough and that they face the sun. We were very lucky and saw them very well.

There are not many mammals in the park and I believe that (most of) the ungulates in the Postberg Reserve are introduced. Outside Postberg Reserve, we saw some nice Bontebok, a big male Eland and a beautiful Cape Grijsbok. Also some Cape Grey Mongoose and Four-striped Grass Mouse crossing the road. We didn't see Caracal that is reported here quite often, but we didn't work hard for it and it was also quite busy with visitors due to the flower season.

The birding was great. We saw plenty of Black Harriers and other nice birds like the Southern Black Korhaan.

We stayed at the Jo-Anne's Beach Cottage B within the National Park which is recommended. Nice cottage and the birding in the morning around the cottage is great at this time of year.



Stoney Point Penguin Colony, Betty's Bay

We stopped here on our way from West Coast National Park to Hermanus. We liked this small reserve very much. The penguins are great and apart from that we saw plenty of (tame) Rock Hyrax and a breeding colony of four different species of Cormorant.

Hermanus

At this time of year the Southern Right Whales appear to be mainly females (with calves). They seemed to be hanging around in shallows in the eastern part of the bay. They were best seen from Sievers Point.

On the first day we saw several whales in the eastern part of the bay, from Gearings Point and our balcony at the Windsor Hotel and when we looked closely those were Bryde's Whales! We also saw plenty of Rock Hyrax and twice a Cape Grey Mongoose foraging along the Cliff Path.

When we left Hermanus on our way to Karoo National Park we took the Karwyderskraal road and saw several Blue Cranes very well.

Karoo National Park

This is a beautiful, mountainous and open National Park. When we were there, quite a lot of flowers were in bloom. This is a good stopover from the Cape to New Holme or Marrick Safari. We saw several ungulates easily that we didn't see elsewhere or are (re)introduced elsewhere, like Red Hartebeest, Mountain Zebra, Springbok, Eland and Gemsbok. We also saw two Grey Rhebock (in daytime and during the nightdrive) in the Lammertjiesleegte Loop. We understand that those are not easily seen.

When we were there they just started catching ungulates to transfer them to other parks and that disturbed the animals quite a lot.

We did two nightdrives with an excellent ranger (Melissa). The first night we did the Lammertjiesleegte Loop and saw Black-backed Jackal, Bat-eared Fox, Grey Rhebock and other ungulates. On the second nightdrive we took the Potlekkertjie Loop and saw a Brown Hyena! Melissa says that she sees Brown Hyena once every week or 10 days so there is a chance, but they are certainly not guaranteed. The night drives here are not as good as in New Holme Nature Lodge of Marrick Safari, but there is always a chance to see something really special, like we did. It is advisable to mail the Karoo National Park when you book the accommodation that you want to do a night drive.

An avian highlight was the Ground Woodpecker that we saw at the view point at the top of Klipspringer pass. This seems to be the best place to see them here.

The different species of tortoise in the park are also a highlight.

We had a normal SUV (Toyota Corolla Cross) and had trouble on the Potlekkertjie loop where we went back just after Klipspringer pass because of the bad road (and it was even dry at that moment). If you have a normal car, the Lammertjiesleegte Loop is probably fine, but it will be a challenge to get further into the park.

New Holme Nature Lodge

We loved this place. It's actually a working farm with plenty of sheep. It's a homely place with great food. Their vision is that you arrive as guests and leave as family and they really work according to that vision.

We did two night drives and saw plenty of Porcupines, Aardwolves, Bat-eared Foxes and Springhares. On the first nightdrive we had a fabulous sighting of an Aardvark. On the second we saw Cape Fox very well and had brief but (my oldest son and I had) good views of a Striped Polecat. The area is huge and I have the feeling that we covered a lot of ground on a night drive and did different parts of the farm on both nights.

We had a morning drive to see Meerkat (Suricate) which we saw, but they are by no means tame here. We also saw plenty of great birds like Double-banded Courser, Ludwig's Bustard, Karoo Korhaan, Northern Black Korhaan en Blue Korhaan.

Marrick Safari

This place had more of a bushcamp feel and the scenery felt similar to Kruger National Park, apart from the huge open "Vlei"-area which made me think of the Masai Mara.

We did two night drives and saw plenty of Porcupines, Aardwolves, Bat-eared Foxes and Springhares. On the first night drive we had great views of an African Wild Cat. I had the feeling that both nights we stayed practically in the same area and did the same loop several times. Our guide, Ben, said that in summer, when the Springbok have their young, he sees Caracal two or three times a week. He hadn't seen Black-footed Cat this year. Apparently he only sees them in dry years.

Another highlight was the "Sengi-tour" where we went to a "koppie" (mountainous area) to look for the Eastern Rock Sengi: a terrific experience. After that they took us for an afternoon drive, for no extra cost, where we saw some of the antelopes really well, like Sable, and had great, close view of Meerkats (Suricate). I know that the antelopes here are (re)introduced, but it didn't feel that way. Being the only vehicle in this wild area with all these antelopes around, was great.

All in all, the nocturnal animals seen at New Holme Nature Lodge and Marrick Safari were rather similar. Cape Fox seems easier at New Holme and Wild Cat (and Caracal) easier at Marrick. Porcupine seems more abundant at New Holme and Meerkat (Suricate) seem more easy at Marrick. Also Marrick has the Sengi. Aardvark is apparently not easy at both places and if you really want to see Aardvark I would recommend to do at least four night drives combined at these two places. The feel of both places is also completely different. I would recommend, if possible, to visit both.

Mokala National Park

We spent a few hours at this nice park before we went to Kimberley airport. There are plenty of nice antelopes in this park, like Roan and Tsessebe, especially in the surroundings of the Lilydale Rest Camp. We also liked the Stofdam Bird Hide with all the colourful little birds that come to drink here (in this time of year). The entrance road to the Lillydale Gate is not good, but not that long. We saw a Kori Bustard next to this road when we left.

Marievale Bird Sanctuary

The last morning my oldest son and I went birding here with Nial Perrins of Bustard Birding which was very nice with the African Rail as a highlight. We didn't see Spotted-necked Otter. Niall says he hasn't seen them in the last half year. That may have to do with the quality of the water, as a result of spillage from nearby mining activities. Niall also said that there was a female Serval with youngsters last year that showed really well, but unfortunately not this year.

Rietvlei Nature Reserve

The last afternoon was spent watching birds and mammals in Rietvlei Nature Reserve. Niall wasn't very enthusiastic with our choice to go there. I can see why because the landscape is not very inspiring: it looks more like a city park. There are actually quite a lot of nice mammals: Black Wildebeest, Buffalo, Red Hartebeest and Hippopotamus were seen.

Our main target was the Secretary Bird which my oldest son really wanted to see and just missed at the Stofdam Bird Hide in Mokala National Park. After lots of searching Niall found us two of these strange and fantastic birds!!!

Final conclusion

In my opinion South Africa is the best wildlife watching destination in the world for family's with teenagers who are interested in watching mammals and birds and for family's who want to travel by themselves in some of the most fantastic landscapes (and flowers) this world has to offer 😊 .

Mammal List

I used *Stuarts Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa (ebook)* for the names of mammals.

Bats:

1. Cape Serotine (*Laephotis capensis*)

Positive identification at Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp. Probably seen more often.

2. Epauletted Fruit Bat (*Epomophorus crypturus/wahlbergi*)

Several beautiful Epauletted Fruit Bats were seen in Satara Rest Camp (in the tree in front of the rest reception) and in Lower Sabie Rest Camp (on the inside of the roof just outside reception). I understand that those in Satara are Peters's and that those in Lower Sabie might be Peters's and/or Wahlberg's.



3. Egyptian Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarida aegyptiaca*)

Several were seen at night at the New Holme Nature Lodge.

Sengis/Elephant Shrews:

4. Eastern Rock Sengi (*Elephantulus myurus*)

Seen extremely well at the Sengi Tour at Marrick Safari. Highlight of the trip for my youngest son.



Shrews:

5. *Lesser Red Musk-Shrew (Crocidura hirta)*

Several shrews seen (in daylight) in Kruger (near Lower Sabie and Satara) were almost certainly this species.

Rodents:

6. *Grey Climbing Mouse (Dendromus melanotis)*

One found sleeping with the Thermal Camera at Satara rest camp and another one seen by my wife in Lower Sabie Rest Camp.



7. *Four-striped Grass Mouse (Rhabdomys pumilio)*

One seen very well at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in Cape Town and several seen briefly next to the road in West Coast National park.



8. *Intermediate Four-striped Grass Mouse (Rhabdomys intermedius)*

Several seen very well at the New Holme Nature Lodge.



9. *Mesic Four-striped Grass Mouse (Rhabdomys dilectus)*

Several seen very well at Marrick Safari. There was a thriving colony under a huge cactus.

10. *Southern Springhare (Pedetes capensis)*

Several seen on every nightdrive at New Holme Nature Lodge en Marrick Safari. Especially abundant at Marrick Safari.

11. *Cape Porcupine (Hystrix africaeaustralis)*

Two were seen at a night drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp. At New Holme Nature Lodge 7 at the first night drive and 6 at the second. At Marrick Safari 5 at the first night drive and 2 at the second. The animal my wife most wanted to see and we saw them very well.



12. *Southern African Ground Squirrel (Geosciurus inauris)*

Several were seen close to New Holme Guest Lodge. Also common at Marrick Safari; it was seen from our cottage.

13. *Smith's Bush Squirrel (Paraxerus cepapi)*

In Kruger National Park these were seen in Orpen Rest Camp, Satara Rest Camp and Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp. They were nowhere very common though.

14. *Eastern Grey Squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis)*

One specimen of this introduced/feral species was seen at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in Cape Town.

Rabbits & Hares:

15. *Scrub Hare (Lepus saxatilis)*

Several seen at night drives in Kruger National Park from Satara Rest Camp, Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp and Lower Sabie Rest Camp. One seen on the second night drive at Marrick Safari.

16. *Cape Hare (Lepus capensis)*

Common on night drives at Karoo National Park, New Holme Nature Lodge and Marrick Safari.

17. *Jameson's Red Rock Rabbit (Pronolagus randensis)*

Seen twice on consecutive nights at Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort crossing the road from the garden close to the Upper Viewpoint.

Aardvark:

18. *Aardvark (Orycteropus afer)*

One seen beautifully on the first night drive at New Holme Nature Lodge.

Elephants:

19. *African Savannah Elephant (Loxodonta africana)*

A few seen in the center of Kruger National Park (on the road from Orpen Gate to Satara Rest Camp). Very common in the southern part of Kruger National Park, especially near Lower Sabie Rest Camp. Also seen from the rest camp itself.



Hyraxes:

20. *Yellow-spotted Hyrax (Heterohyrax brucei)*

Two seen at the mixed colony at the Upper Viewpoint at Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort.

21. *Rock Hyrax (Procavia capensis)*

Several seen at Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort, at the Upper Viewpoint and close to the Lower Viewpoint. Many (tamer specimens) were seen at the Stoney Point Penguin Colony (Betty's Bay) and at the Cliff Path in Hermanus. In Hermanus we saw them from the balcony of our apartment.

Rhinoceroses:

22. *Southern White Rhinoceros (Ceratotherium simum)*

Seen in the central and the southern part of Kruger Park where they were not easy to find. Also seen at Rietvlei Nature Reserve.

Hippopotamuses:

23. *Common Hippopotamus (Hippopotamus amphibius)*

Seen at several places in the Kruger National Park such as Nsemani Dam, Lake Panic Bird Hide and from and near Lower Sabie Rest Camp. Also a few seen at Marais Dam in Rietvlei Nature Reserve.

Cetaceans:

24. *Heaviside's Dolphin (Cephalorhynchus heavisidii)*

Seen every morning from our apartment at Mouille Point in Cape Town. Also seen really well at Granger Bay (close to Mouille Point).

25. *Southern Right Whale (Eubalaena australis)*

Several females with calves were seen in Hermanus. Mainly at the eastern part of Walker Bay. Best seen from Sievers Point.

26. *Bryde's Whale (Balaenoptera edeni)*

At least three were seen on our first day in Hermanus, mainly on the western part of Walker Bay. One was hunting very close to Gearings Point.



Pinnipeds:

27. *Cape Fur Seal (Arctocephalus pusillus)*

At least 40 were seen at Seal Landing between the Aquarium at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town. Later a few were also seen in Hermanus and in Gansbaai.

Weasels, Otters, Badgers:

28. *Striped Polecat (Zorilla) (Ictonyx striatus)*

One was seen briefly but very well (through binoculars) on the second night drive at New Holme Nature Lodge. A beautiful creature!

29. *Honey Badger (Mellivora capensis)*

Two were seen very well crossing the gravel road close to Crocodile Bridge Rest Camp in the afternoon. A fantastic sighting!



30. *Spotted-necked Otter (Hydricotis maculicollis)*

Two were seen very well at the reedbeds of Millstream Lake in the late afternoon at Millstream Farm in Dullstroom.



31. *Cape Clawless Otter (Aonyx (Lutra) capensis)*

At least four were seen playing hide and seek with us at the reedbeds of Millstream Lake in the late afternoon at Millstream Farm in Dullstroom

Mongoose:

32. *Suricate (Meerkat) (Suricata suricatta)*

Four seen well, but quite far away, at the morning Meerkat drive at New Holme Nature Lodge. One was seen at the Vlei area in Marrick Safari in the afternoon and four were seen afterwards very close to the camp at Marrick Safari.

33. *Yellow Mongoose (Cynictis penicillata)*

Four seen at a burrow at the morning Meerkat drive at New Holme Nature Lodge. Later single individuals were seen here several times. At Marrick Safari single individuals were seen several times. Also seen at Marievale Bird Sanctuary and Rietvlei Nature Reserve. We even saw two on the airstrip of Kimberley Airport.

34. *Small (Cape) Grey Mongoose (Herpestes pulverulentus)*

Two were seen crossing the road at West Coast National Park. Two were seen extremely well at the Hermanus Cliff Path from the balcony of our apartment.

35. *Banded Mongoose (Mungos mungo)*

A group of 12 was seen drinking at the Lake Panic Bird Hide in Kruger National Park.

36. *Slender Mongoose (Herpestes sanguineus)*

One seen on the road from Satara to Orpen Gate at Kruger National Park. Also one seen at Marrick Safari that was being chased away by a Yellow Mongoose. Singles were also seen at Marievale Bird Sanctuary and Rietvlei Nature Reserve.

37. *Dwarf Mongoose (Helogale parvula)*

A group was seen really well at the Upper Viewpoint at Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort. Several seen in southern part of Kruger National Park, especially between Lower Sabie Rest Camp and Crocodile Bridge Rest Camp.

38. *Water (Marsh) Mongoose (Atilax paludinosus)*

Seen two times crossing a track at New Holme Nature Lodge.

Genets & Civets:

39. *African Civet (Civettictis civetta)*

One was seen badly on the night drive from Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp and was mainly identified by thermal camera. One was seen extremely well on the night drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp.



40. *Common Large-spotted Genet (Genetta maculata)*

One seen on both night drives at Satara Rest Camp. One at the entrance of Lower Sabie Rest Camp at closing time and one on the night drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp.

Felids:

41. African Lion (Panthera leo)

Three males were seen in the afternoon close to Orpen Gate. One female was seen on the second night drive at Satara night drive. Six females and a male were seen eating a Zebra on the night drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp where we also had a brief sighting of a cub.

42. Leopard (Panthera pardus)

Six individuals were seen in Kruger National Park. One was spotted by my eldest son in a tree next to the tarred road south of Satara Rest Camp while driving 50 km per hour which turned out to be two. One within half an hour after that, very close to Satara Rest Camp. One crossing the road between Skukuza and Afsaal picnic site. One far away in a tree between Lower Sabie Rest Camp and Crocodile Bridge Rest Camp. Finally one on night drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp.



43. African Wildcat (Felis lybica)

One seen extremely well on the first night drive at Marrick Safari.



44. Serval (Leptailurus serval)

One seen badly on the night drive from Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp. Mainly identified by the thermal camera.

Hyenas:

45. *Spotted Hyena (Crocuta crocuta)*

On the first afternoon and evening we already saw 9 on the way to and close to Satara including a pup popping out of a drainage pipe next to the road. We also saw several of them on the night drives from Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp en Lower Sabie Rest Camp and one in the morning on a carcass near Lower Sabie Rest Camp. My oldest son called himself a “hyena-magnet” which we laughed about, but look at the next two species.....

46. *Southern Aardwolf (Proteles cristata)*

An enormous total of 13 were seen! Two seen at the first night drive and three at the second night drive at New Holme Nature Lodge. Five seen at the first night drive and three at the second night drive at Marrick Safari. Including some very close sightings. Ben, the guide at Marrick safari, claims they are more active on clear nights (“They like to walk in the moonlight”).



47. *Brown Hyena (Hyaena brunnea)*

One was seen well on the second night drive in Karoo National Park on the Potlekkertjie trail.



Canids:

48. Black-backed Jackal (Lupulella mesomelas)

A few were seen in the late afternoon near Satara Rest Camp. Also seen on both night drives at Karoo National Park. Best sighting was of one in the last sunlight trying to bite the last scratches of meat from a Gemsbok-horn.



49. African Wilddog (Lycaon pictus)

Seen three times near Satara. The highlight of our holiday was a group of 12 that was socialising on the tar road south of Satara late afternoon and then caught the scent of a group of Impala and Zebra and started hunting with us behind it!!!



50. Cape Fox (Vulpes chama)

One seen well on the second night drive at New Holme Nature Lodge.

51. Bat-eared Fox (Otocyon megalotis)

Plenty of sightings of this fantastic animal. Three were seen on the first night drive in Karoo National Park. Three on the first night drive and four on the second night drive from New Holme Guest Lodge. Seven on the first night drive and an incredible 14 on the second night drive from Marrick Safarin including close views of them foraging. Ben, the guide at Marrick safari, claims that this species is also more active on clear nights



Primates:

52. Vervet Monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*)

Mainly seen at Rest Camps (especially Satara where they raid the outside kitchens) and lodges. Sometimes also seen at the side of the road.

53. Chacma Baboon (*Papio ursinus*)

Only one group was seen in the Kruger National Park. Seen multiple times in Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort and also two groups during the hike through Blyde River Canyon from the Upper Viewpoint to the Lower Viewpoint. Also one group was seen two times foraging in Karoo National Park.

54. Southern Lesser Galago (*Galago moholi*)

At least three were seen (unfortunately from far away) during the night drive from Lower Sabie Rest Camp.

Bovids:

55. Impala (*Aepyceros melampus*)

The most commonly spotted mammal in Kruger National Park, but not less appreciated. Also one male seen in Mokala National Park.

56. Oribi (*Ourebia ourebi*)

One was seen from the car on a hillside just north of Dullstroom.

57. Springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*)

Common in Karoo National Park, but only on the Pottlekertjie loop (not seen on the Lammertjiesleegte loop). Commonly seen in Mokala National park. A few seen in the Postberg Reserve in West Coast National Park. A group was seen at Millstream Farm in Dullstroom and they were also very common at Marrick Safari.

58. Gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*)

Several singles and small groups were seen on both days in Karoo National Park. Several were seen in Mokala National Park. A small group was seen in the Postberg Reserve in Wwest Coast National Park. Also seen at Marrick Safari.



59. Steenbok (*Raphicerus campestris*)

Commonly seen as singles or, more often, in groups of two. For instance in Kruger National park (Near Satara Rest Camp), West Coast National Park, Karoo National Park and New Holme Nature Lodge.

60. Cape Grysbok (*Raphicerus melanotis*)

One was seen very well during the day next to the road at West Coast National Park.



61. Common (Southern) Reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*)

One seen grazing next to our cottage at Millstream Farm in Dullstroom.

62. Common Duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*)

More commonly seen than expected, especially at night drives. For instance at Berg-en-Dal rest Camp, Karoo National Park and Marrick Safari. Three were seen in daytime next to the road close to Blyde River Canyon.

63. Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus sylvaticus*)

Several seen inside and just outside Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp.

64. *Greater Kudu (Tragelaphus strepsiceros)*

Seen at various places: Kruger National Park (especially on the road from Orpen Gate to Satara), Karoo National Park and Mokala National Park.

65. *Grey Rhebock (Pelea capreolus)*

Two were seen on the first night drive in Karoo National Park and the following morning in the Lammertjiesleegte loop.



66. *Nyala (Tragelaphus angasii)*

Three were seen in Kruger National Park: a female and a young seen inside Satara Rest Camp and one female seen at lake Panic Bird Hide.

67. *Common Eland (Taurotragus oryx)*

One male seen in West Coast National park. Several (large) groups were seen in Karoo National Park.

68. *Blesbok (Damaliscus pygargus phillipsi)*

Seen at Millstream Farm in Dullstroom, New Holme Nature Lodge, Marrick Safari and Rietvlei Nature Reserve.

69. *Bontebok (Damaliscus pygargus pygargus)*

Four were seen in West Coast National Park and a larger group was seen both days at the Postberg Reserve inside West Coast National Park.

70. *Klipspringer (Oreotragus oreotragus)*

One was seen in daytime near the Upper Viewpoint at Blyde Canyon a Forever Resort, where two were seen at night. Also two seen at a koppie in Kruger National Park between Skukuza and Berg-and-Dal Rest Camp.

71. *Sable Antelope (Hippotragus niger)*

A group was seen at Marrick Safari.

72. *Roan Antelope (Hippotragus equinus)*

Several groups were seen in Mokala National Park, especially near Lilydale Rest Camp. Also seen at Marrick Safari (at night).

73. *Waterbuck (Kobus ellipsiprymnus)*

Only seen a few times in Kruger National Park, one group near Satara (being chased away by hunting Wild Dogs), one group near Orpen Gate and another near Lower Sabie Rest Camp.

74. *Red Hartebeest (Alcelaphus buselaphus caama)*

Seen several times in Karoo National Park. Also one seen in Mokala National Park.

75. *Tsessebe (Damaliscus lunatus)*

Several were seen in Mokala National Park.



76. *African Savanna Buffalo (Syncerus caffer)*

Only seen in the southern part of Kruger National Park, amongst others near Phabeni Gate, Skukuza, Crocodile Bridge Rest Camp and from Lower Sabie Rest Camp.



77. *Black Wildebeest (Connochaetes gnou)*

A few groups were seen at Rietvlei Nature Reserve.

78. *Common Wildebeest (Connochaetes taurinus)*

Commonly seen in Kruger National Park, especially from the road between Orpen Gate and Satara. Often together with Plains Zebra.

Zebras:

79. *Plains Zebra (Equus quagga)*

Commonly seen in Kruger National Park. Also seen at Mokala National Park.

80. *Cape Mountain Zebra (Equus zebra)*

Several were seen in the Postberg Reserve in West Coast National Park. Commonly seen in Karoo National Park, especially at the Lammertjiesleegte loop.

Pigs:

81. *Common Warthog (Phacochoerus africanus)*

Seen a few times at Kruger National park. Much more common at Mokala National Park.

Giraffes:

82. *Southern Giraffe (Giraffa giraffa)*

Regularly seen in Kruger National Park. One seen (drinking) in Mokala National Park.

